

## Civil Service Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme

### General Council Report 1376

(Meeting/s of 27 October 1999, 14 December 1999, 13 December 2000, 31 January 2001)

Claim that the Chief Inspector of Accidents and the Inspectors of Accidents in the Department of Public Enterprise are paid the same allowance as paid to Senior Aeronautical Inspectors in the Irish Aviation Authority.

**Claim that the Chief Inspector of Accidents and the Inspector of Accidents in the Air Accident Investigation Unit of the Department of Public Enterprise be paid the same allowance as paid to Senior Aeronautical Inspectors in the Irish Aviation Authority.**

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(Meetings of 27 October 1999, 14 December 1999, 13 December 2000 and 31 January 2001)

1. The Staff Side said the claim was for the Chief Aeronautical Officer and three Aeronautical Officers who act as Inspectors in the Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) of the Department of Public Enterprise. They were seeking an allowance equivalent to that paid to the Aeronautical Inspectors in the Irish Aviation Authority which is set at 11.3% of the maximum of the pay scale for that grade (currently £4,781 p.a.). A similar percentage allowance for the claimants would range from £6,075 to £6,518 respectively. They were also seeking significant retrospection in recognition of the total flexibility given by the Inspectors in the past. It was agreed to have discussions on the claim, involving IMPACT, Department of Public Enterprise and the Department of Finance, outside Council.

2. The Staff Side said there was a statutory obligation on the Air Accident Investigation Unit to investigate every accident or serious incident involving an Irish registered aircraft or Irish citizens both inside and outside the State. In order to meet this statutory obligation, the four officers are effectively on call on a 24 hours, 365 day a year basis. While the members take turns to be the first point of contact for notifications, the others must be available if required. This is a significant intrusion into their social and family lives. Once a notification of an accident or incident is received, an Inspector responds immediately regardless of the time or where the accident or incident has occurred. All the Inspectors have "Go Bags" containing suitable clothing and necessary equipment in their homes, cars and offices so that they can respond immediately to any call out. In addition,

when an accident occurs, the Inspectors must attend for as long as necessary to secure the scene and investigate the causes. As a result they may have to work significant extra attendance and be absent from home for a prolonged period. As well as the on-call and extra attendance requirements, the job is a highly stressful one especially when fatalities are involved. The Inspectors also have to liaise with victims' families.

3. The Official Side said that as a general rule they would have reservations about the payment of allowances to grades at this senior level - three of the claimants are at Principal level and one at Assistant Principal level. Officers at this level throughout the civil service can be required for consultation and attendance outside normal hours from time to time without additional remuneration. When the Review Body set the present salary levels for the claimants' positions in 1980 they were aware of a requirement for attendance outside normal hours. However, there has been a significant increase in the volume of air travel, and consequently in the likelihood of accidents, since then. The Investigation Unit was established, with specific obligations, by statutory regulations in 1997.

4. The Official Side rejected the link being made with the Aeronautical Inspectors in the Irish Aviation Authority. This was a commercial semi-State body which had severed all links with the Civil Service and the allowance in question had a special history of its own. It was not an appropriate comparator.

5. After further discussions, the Official Side accepted that the on-call liability on the claimants had become exceptionally onerous and, as an on-going feature of the job, went well beyond what would normally be expected of other senior officers. They were, therefore, prepared to make the following offer of an allowance in the nature of pay:

1 March 1999 £3,520 p.a.  
1 July 1999 £3,645 p.a.  
1 April 2000 £3,681 p.a.  
1 October 2000 £4,000 p.a.

5 At a meeting on 31 January 2001, the Council agreed to recommend acceptance of the offer.

6. This Report records such agreement.

7. This Report was adopted on 31 January 2001.

Agreed Report

This report was adopted on 31 January 2001